



NEWS RELEASE

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IDPH Offering \$12 Million in Grants for Lead Abatement During Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

Following Drop in Child Lead Testing During COVID-19 Pandemic, Governor Pritzker and Lt. Governor Stratton join IDPH in Support of Lead Poisoning Awareness Campaign

CHICAGO – As part of the State of Illinois’ efforts to protect children from lead poisoning and in recognition of Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is offering \$12 million in grant opportunities to local municipalities and community groups to help residential property owners with lead abatement and mitigation projects. Governor JB Pritzker also issued a proclamation declaring October 23-29 as Lead Poisoning Prevention Week in Illinois.

“Illinois is pleased to join with health care professionals, agencies, and their delegates in observance of National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week this October,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “My administration is proud to offer this \$12 million grant opportunity in an effort to increase awareness and promote prevention of lead exposure in children.”

"Every child deserves to grow up healthy and well. Our state is laser-focused on ensuring young people have a path to a bright future, and mitigating the harmful long-term effects of lead contamination is critical to that mission," said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. "By spreading awareness and providing these grants to help prevent lead exposure, communities can come together to protect our children and support families so we can build a healthier Illinois."

“Protecting children from exposure to lead is critical for their long-term health,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. “Even low levels of lead have been shown to affect learning and the ability to pay attention. Early detection by a healthcare provider is crucial to prevent further exposure and reduce harmful damage. As a pediatrician, I know the most important step to preventing exposure is the removal of lead hazards from the environments in which children live, learn, grow, and play. IDPH is happy to announce efforts during Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week to help local municipalities with lead abatement projects to improve the health of their communities.”

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IDPH is currently accepting applications through November 18 from local municipalities and community action agencies for up to \$12 million in grants from the Comprehensive Lead Education, Reduction, and Window Replacement (CLEAR-Win) program. Applications must be submitted through the web-based “EGrAMS” system (Electronic Grants Administration and Management System) utilized by IDPH for end-to-end grants management.

CLEAR-Win is run by IDPH’s Division of Environmental Health with the goal of assisting residential property owners of single-family homes and multi-unit residential properties to reduce lead paint and leaded plumbing hazards in qualified residential properties by replacing old windows and other lead hazard control techniques. The program aims to increase lead-safe housing, reduce childhood lead exposure, and reduce the financial burden of lead mitigation for low-income residential property owners.

Director Vohra noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many people missed routine healthcare appointments in an effort to isolate and slow the spread of the virus. Since the beginning of the pandemic, lead testing rates declined approximately 22%. However, even with a decrease in testing, there were still higher numbers of children who were exposed to lead, likely resulting from increased time spent in homes.

“It is vitally important to do screening in the first year of life if children are at risk, and then again a second test one year afterwards,” Director Vohra said.

To raise awareness and reverse the decline in testing, the IDPH Lead Program launched a promotional campaign on digital media in the summer of 2022 aimed at families with children and pregnant persons in areas of the state identified with the highest childhood lead exposure rates. The campaign is running again on the IDPH social media accounts during Lead Poisoning Prevention Week.

While the primary source of lead exposure is contaminated dust created by disturbed and/or deteriorated lead-based paint, it can also be caused by lead in soil, water, or other products containing lead.

Three municipalities in Illinois were previously awarded grants from CLEAR-Win for a total of \$14,977,927 for lead and \$955,439 for the Healthy Homes supplemental award.

The primary objective of the IDPH’s Illinois Lead Program is to eliminate the incidence of childhood lead exposure. Illinois has approximately 2 million homes that contain lead hazards. Exposure to lead may cause damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavioral problems, and even coma and death can occur at severely high levels.



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Anyone can be exposed to lead, but children are at greatest risk. Lead can also be passed from a pregnant person to their unborn child. All children ages 6 and younger are required to be evaluated for lead exposure risks by their physician and receive a blood test, if necessary. The Illinois Lead Program recommends all children be evaluated or tested as indicated at ages 12 months and 24 months, and 3, 4, 5, and 6 years of age. IDPH also recommends that pregnant persons be evaluated for lead exposure and tested if deemed necessary.

For more information about IDPH's lead poisoning prevention programs, click [HERE](#).

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